



BILLY BAULCH JR.



MICHAEL BAULCH

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Heart-Broken Parents Identify 2 Dead Sons by Studying Skulls

BY KING WATERS
Chronicle Staff

The heart-broken truck driver stretched his upturned palms across the yellow kitchen table and asked: "Did you ever hold your dead son's teeth in your hands?"

The truck driver, Billy Baulch, and his wife, Janie, talked quietly about how they identified the skeletal remains of their two sons by studying the skulls.

Thus two more of Houston's 27 sex-torture murder victims became known Tuesday—leaving seven unidentified.

The brothers were Billy Baulch Jr., 17, and Michael Anthony Baulch, 15, of 439 W. 16th in the Heights.

Their father curled his hand back and looked at it as though the teeth still lay there. "It's hard, you know," he said of the identification. "I had to do it."

"My wife had to do it."

Billy Jr. left home May 21, 1972. Two days later he sent a postcard from Madisonville. The family never heard another word from him.

Michael disappeared last November.

Dr. Joseph A. Jachimczyk, county medical examiner, said Billy Jr. had been strangled.

The death cords, he said, were found around Billy's neck when his remains were uncovered on a beach near High Island in August.

Michael, shot twice in the head, had been buried in a southwest Houston boatshed, Jachimczyk said.

The boatshed was rented by Dean Arnold Corll, shot to death Aug. 8 by Elmer Wayne Henley Jr., 17, after an all-night party.

Henley and David Owen Brooks, 18, both from the Heights, are under indictment on 10 charges of murder in the slayings.

The pair, who led authorities to the victims' graves, say Corll, 33, a Houston Lighting & Power Co. electrician, committed most of the killings.

It was Corll who strangled Billy Baulch Jr. at an apartment on Schuler, Brooks has told officers.

Baulch told police he had asked Corll about Billy's disappearance, but that Corll claimed no knowledge of it.

Baulch said his sons attended Hamilton Junior High School with Henley and Brooks, and that Billy once sold candy door-to-door for Corll's mother.

Even with those facts, and with Brooks' statement to prepare them for a shock, Baulch says, holding their sons' bones was traumatic.

He sat with his wife in their darkened, old, but well-built, home Tuesday night, staring at pictures of their sons. "You don't know what they meant to me," he said. "You don't know what it's like."

Jachimczyk said he had been willing to testify to the brothers' identity, without the parents' positive identification.

"But now they know for sure," Jachimczyk said. "We showed them pictures of the boys' skulls and chins and asked them to identify the jaws and teeth. They did not have to do it."

"It was emotional. It wasn't pleasant, I tell you."

Baulch said, "It wasn't like the others. We identified our own sons."

Pathologists had positively identified the 18 other known victims.

Jachimczyk said he had worked three weeks exclusively

on the Baulch remains, comparing the skulls with photographs of the boys and checking their dental records.

He said Baulch recognized a belt buckle, found in Michael's grave, as one he had given his son.

"I knew it right off," Baulch said. "I didn't give it to him for his birthday or anything, I just gave it to him."

Mrs. Baulch, gazing vacantly across her dining room, began to weep. She hid her face in her hands.

Jachimczyk said the job of identifying the seven remaining victims is growing more difficult, that some may be only tentatively identified.

He does not want to call in other parents of suspected victims to identify bodies, he said.

"Bones," Mrs. Baulch said, "that's all they were."

Baulch slid his chair out from the table, turning to grab a handful of air and crush it in his fist.

"You don't know what it's like," he said, "for it to be this way."

"It's hell to bury them like that, to bury them bone by bone."

Services for Billy Jr. and Michael will be Friday at 10:30 a.m. at Heights Funeral Home, 1317 Heights Blvd.

Burial will be in Woodlawn Garden of Memories.